

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dr. Patterson:

You usually encourage publication of work in important areas of California botany. In *Madrño* volume 42, number 1, January–March 1995, however, I felt that Peggy L. Fiedler's review of *Ethnobotany of the California Indians, Volumes 1 and 2*, by B. M. Beck and S. S. Strike, on pages 88 and 89, was not encouraging to either writers or publishers in botany.

Dr. Fielder criticizes "a lack of consistency in the listing of plant names and the inaccuracies of the index." While I grant there are inaccuracies in the index, the "lack of consistency" of plant names is quite the correct approach since Bea Beck is a librarian presenting her selection of printed work; she is not examining and correcting herbarium specimens, so she would not change names from what is given in the literature. Nomenclatural changes much be made by botanists, not by librarians.

Further, although California is fortunate to have the new *Jepson Manual*, it is not error free, and does have omissions (also true of *Ethnobotany of the California Indians*). The reviewer complains that *Scirpus lacustris* L. doesn't appear in *Jepson*. I would like to point out that *S. lacustris* L. does appear in J. C. Willis' *A Dictionary of the Flowering Plants and Ferns*, Eighth Edition, 1973 on page 1047. That work is in most libraries.

When the reviewer makes the comment "I suspect the average user . . . will not have the necessary botanical references to solve the mystery" I am amazed. All residents of California have excellent library resources and botanical references available to them.

Madrño does a good job of publishing and encouraging writers in the literature of botany. The review of this work, however, was quite unfair in her criticism of the two volume *Ethnobotany of the California Indians*. I hope your readers will ignore her review and use the books as they were intended to be used—making additions and revisions as they work.

Sincerely,

Jane B. Cole

1994–95 President, Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries